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GUATEMALA:
NO COMMUNIST BRIDGEHEAD

ELENA DE LA SOUCHERE

U. S. AND LATIN AMERICA

THE EDITORS

WORLD EVENTS

SCOTT NEARING

VOL. 6

3

PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN SOCIALISM

CONCLUSION OF A DISCUSSION

EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEEZY

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

"What Every American Should Know About Indo-China" (last month's Review of the Month) met with an immediately favorable reception from subscribers all over the country. It is apparent from reader comments that the manufacturers of public opinion in this country have been all too successful in suppressing the truth about the origins and nature of the Indo-China war, and an orderly presentation of the facts such as we have tried to provide is clearly much needed. The real trouble, here as elsewhere, lies in the problem of reaching people with the truth. As we announced last month, the article has been made into a pamphlet and is being distributed as rapidly and widely as funds permit. An encouraging number of readers have contributed money for this purpose, and the pamphlet has already gone out to all Congressmen, important Washington officials, and to some libraries. But a good deal more can be done. We don't need to tell you that the Indo-China crisis

(*continued on inside back cover*)

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UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA

We publish elsewhere in this issue an article by Elena de la Souchère which puts the present mounting tension between the United States and Guatemala in proper historical perspective. It is an opportune occasion to raise a few pointed questions regarding the aims and prospects of Washington's policy not only towards Guatemala but towards Latin America in general.

On the whole, of course, Latin America is a region of backward economies which have long been mercilessly exploited by indigenous feudalisms and foreign imperialisms. Political, social, and economic revolutions are long overdue in most of the Latin American countries. In some they have already started.

United States policy can either adjust to the necessities and inevitabilities of the Latin American situation, or it can attempt to buck them. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy was an intelligent and sympathetic attempt to follow the former course. It paid dividends not only in terms of good economic and political relations among the American countries but also in terms of building up a reservoir of good will for the United States in the hearts of the Latin American peoples. There was never any question in the New Deal period of the Latin American revolutions' turning against the United States and becoming a source of dissension and conflict. The greatest Latin American figure of the New Deal era was Lazaro Cárdenas, President of Mexico in the second half of the decade of the 30s; the most symbolic act of the period was an act of omission, the absence of United States intervention when the Cárdenas government nationalized the Mexican oil industry in 1938.

After Roosevelt's death—and indeed before, so far as the conduct of World War II was concerned—the money changers returned to the temples. The Good Neighbor policy was not exactly jettisoned, it just languished. The State Department, which had never taken either a leading or enthusiastic part in developing the policy became increasingly influential; the New Deal agencies which had

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carried the Good Neighbor ball were liquidated (historians will someday record that this was the real meaning of the Harry Dexter White case) or excluded from the field of foreign policy. By the end of the Democrats' twenty years of rule, there was nothing left of the Good Neighbor policy but the words, written down in numerous treaties and spoken on even more numerous ceremonial occasions.

It might seem that there was little the Eisenhower administration could do to worsen inter-American relations, but this would be to underestimate the Republicans' abilities. Writes Simon G. Hanson, one of the leading United States authorities on Latin American affairs:

> If the [Eisenhower] administration had limited itself to the familiar verbiage of the inter-American system, the damage might have been held to that which uninspired leadership and an impressive ignorance produce at any time. Unfortunately, under cover of the dreary platitudes the administration was moving rapidly to wreck the very basis of sound economic relations with Latin America. ("The End of the Good-Neighbor Policy," *Inter-American Economic Affairs,* Autumn 1953, pp. 7-8.)

And Mr. Hanson proves his point to the hilt in 50 pages of scathingly critical analysis of the first eight months of Republican policy toward our neighbors to the South. After one year of Republican rule, we can safely say that official United States attitudes and policies toward Latin America are about back where they were in the days of Mellon and Hoover, of the marines and "dollar diplomacy."

Conditions in general, however, are not the same. The Latin Americans themselves have come a long way in the intervening years. They are in no mood to be pushed around by the United States (or anyone else for that matter), and the vast majority of them are determined to get a share of that "liberation"—economic as well as political—about which they have read so much in the last fifteen years.

This is the background of the present crisis in United States-Guatemalan relations. Where Mexico was the pace-setter of revolutionary change among Latin American countries during the 30s, Guatemala has played that role during the later 40s and early 50s. And where the New Deal adopted an attitude of sympathetic nonintervention toward Mexico (and in its last days under Roosevelt welcomed the beginnings of the Guatemalan Revolution), the Big Business administration of Eisenhower, Dulles & Co. has apparently taken a holy vow to fight Guatemala by every means available and, if possible, to destroy the Guatemalan Revolution root and branch.

The methods which the United States has adopted in its cold

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war against Guatemala have been most clearly revealed in the last few months.

Early this year, the Guatemalan government exposed, with full documentation, an elaborate plot on the part of two exiled army officers to invade the country from Honduras and El Salvador, instigate an uprising, and overthrow the regime (this plot is briefly referred to in the article by Elena de la Souchère, p. 102 below). The involvement of United Fruit was fully proved and that of the United States government could hardly fail to be inferred by the Guatemalans from the fact that the State Department, far from reprimanding United Fruit, pooh-poohed the whole affair and continued to lend vigorous diplomatic support to United Fruit's wholly illegal claims for special consideration under the Guatemalan land reform law. On top of this came the Caracas Conference of the Organization of American States in March, to which John Foster Dulles came for the sole purpose of mobilizing all of two continents against the government of one small country of three million inhabitants.

Mr. Dulles managed to push through the Conference an anti-Communist resolution which everyone knew was aimed at Guatemala, but it had fewer teeth than the State Department wanted it to have; and the relative receptions accorded by the delegates to Dulles on the one hand and to Guatemalan Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello on the other showed clearly enough where the sympathy of the peoples of the Latin American countries lay. The truth is that both of the first two rounds of 1954—the exiles' plot and the Caracas Conference—were won by the Guatemalans.

These successes had consequences of an opposite nature: Latin Americans were encouraged, and Washington was infuriated. New fronts and new battles in the struggle were quickly opened. A magnificent strike of some 40,000 hitherto unorganized Honduran workers against United Fruit and Standard Fruit began early in May and spread to United Fruit workers on the eastern seaboard of Guatemala. Honduran students supported the strike and collected money for the strikers. Workers and students together: an ominous combination for representatives of the *ancien régime* in Latin America. A little earlier, a group of Nicaraguan officers revolted against Nicaraguan President Somoza, one of the State Department's most trusted gangster-dictators in the Caribbean area. Their failure pointed up the same lesson, the crucial importance of the worker and student support which they lacked.

The internally threatened Honduran and Nicaraguan governments, echoed by Washington, naturally blamed their troubles on Communism and Guatemala. The stage was set for the signing of military assistance pacts between Honduras and Nicaragua on the one hand and the United States on the other.

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Guatemala now suddenly found itself faced by a new and more serious kind of invasion than that which a handful of exiled officers had been able to mount—the threat of two reactionary governments, endangered by their own peoples seeking to follow the Guatemalan road to social reform and improvement, backed by the military might of Washington which had already proclaimed to the world its enmity to the Guatemalan regime. The government of President Arbenz now felt, and quite naturally so under the circumstances, that its most urgent problem was to strengthen its armed forces to deter aggression or to defeat it if it should come. (The idea, incidentally, that the Arbenz government might have been planning an aggression on its own, which has been assiduously propagated by enemies of Guatemala both in the United States and in Latin America, is so inherently absurd as to be completely incredible on its face. There is absolutely nothing that the State Department would welcome more than a Guatemalan attack on one of its neighbors. Why in the world should the Guatemalan government oblige?)

Guatemala first sought to buy arms and equipment in the United States and was of course refused. Next came attempts to buy in Western Europe, similarly unsuccessful (in such matters the eye of Washington is sharp and the arm long). Only then did Guatemala turn to Czechoslovakia, the only country that could both promise delivery and afford to ignore United States wrath.

The delivery of a shipload of Czechoslovakian arms at Puerto Barrios in May, signifying that the third round had ended with Guatemala at least holding its own, was the signal for a renewed and intensified outburst from the State Department and the kept press (both here and throughout Latin America). What a revealing incident! According to the new "free world" international law now in the making, there is no higher crime in the book than for a regime which Washington has marked out for destruction to acquire the means of self defense!

The fourth and fifth rounds followed in quick succession. On May 31st the Guatemalan government announced that it had smashed the biggest plot yet hatched to overthrow the regime established by the Revolution of October 1944. Once again, the reactionaries and their foreign supporters were foiled in their efforts to win back Guatemala "from within."

And on June 7th the New York Times carried a dispatch from Sydney Gruson, datelined Mexico City, reporting that:

> It is almost certain that the Organization of American States will meet by the end of this month to discuss the case of communism in Guatemala.

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> According to reliable information here, preliminary conversations in the last two weeks among members of the Organization of American States are agreed on the necessity of a meeting. The negotiations now going on are to decide what action against Guatemala can be agreed on beforehand.

As we write, we are, as it were, in the middle of the fifth round, with the outcome still quite undetermined. Will the meeting of the Organization of American States really take place as predicted by Gruson? If so, will it, like the Caracas Conference, pass another resolution at Washington's behest? Or will it move to stronger action, such as economic sanctions, in accordance with the undoubted desires of the United States government?

We cannot answer these questions yet, but of one thing we can be sure, the fifth round will not be the last no matter how it comes out. Guatemala is but a manifestation of the great Latin American revolution of the 20th century. Even if the Guatemalan regime is crushed, which is very far from certain or even probable, that revolution will go on. And every setback administered to it under the aegis of Washington, even every threat to it emanating from Washington, will turn it increasingly against the United States and force it to seek friends elsewhere.

The New Deal and the Good Neighbor showed that it is perfectly possible for the United States to adapt itself to the Latin American revolution and to do so with mutual benefits to both sides. That revolution is still far from its socialist phase; and, given an intelligent policy on the part of the American ruling class, it may develop relatively slowly and peacefully, perhaps over a period measured in decades, before it reaches its socialist phase. But much more of Mr. Dulles' brand of anti-Communism will split Latin America between extreme Right and extreme Left, and will force the Latin American revolution relatively quickly to take on the characteristics and forms which are so familiar to us from the events of the postwar years in Asia. And under such circumstances, the leadership of the revolution will fall into the hands of the Communists as certainly as it did in China and Indo-China.

The Eisenhower administration is made up of God-fearing men who surely know that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. They apparently have yet to learn that the road to Communism is paved with anti-Communist intentions. If they don't quickly change their Latin American policies, they will soon find out.

(June 9, 1954)

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GUATEMALA: NO COMMUNIST BRIDGEHEAD

BY ELENA DE LA SOUCHERE

So many articles on Guatemala have recently been published in the press of the United States—including one in this journal itself—that it might seem impossible to add anything new. But it may help the American reader to reach conclusions concerning the role of this small country if he has before him an analysis which starts from a fresh and impartial point of view, that of European public opinion.

The Caracas Conference of the Organization of American States, which took place during the month of March, was followed in Western Europe with greater interest than had ever before been accorded to an inter-American gathering. The debates put the spotlight on Guatemala, a small country which a few weeks earlier most Europeans could not have located on a map and which then all of a sudden became the center of interest and controversy. The campaign launched against Guatemala in the United States press gave to the European public, newly awakened to an interest in American realities, the always unpleasant sensation of watching a bitter struggle of the strong against the weak. The passionate denunciations of the actions of the Guatemalan government by eminent American personalities were all the more surprising to the man in the street in London or Paris or Madrid because he couldn't understand how a little country with no industry and an army of only 3,000 men could be such a threat to the most powerful country in the world.

Was this reaction perhaps superficial? Could the weak, after all, give the strong legitimate grounds for worry? These are the questions which we shall attempt to answer. Let us at the outset put aside all preconceptions one way or the other, and let us examine the presumed danger in the light of all the evidence available to us. Are the intentions of this little country toward the United States as hostile as we have been told? And if so, what weapons could it use to carry

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This is the second of a series of articles by the author on Latin American countries. The first, "Venezuela: Luxury, Poverty, and Tyranny," appeared in the April issue. Mlle. de la Souchère is a Spanish Republican now living in France who writes widely in the French left press on Iberian and Latin American developments. In a letter accompanying the manuscript of this article, the author explains that this study of Guatemala is deliberately designed to complement, rather than duplicate, Anna Louise Strong's "remarkable and well-documented" article ("Guatemala: A First-Hand Report") which appeared in the March issue of MR.

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out its evil designs? What are its aims, its aspirations, its necessities, the resources at its command?

Portrait of a Country

From a geographical point of view, Guatemala is a land of mountains, high plateaus, bare rocks, and luxuriant forests which hide in their humid depths barbarian temples, colossal statues, ruins of palaces, vestiges of the ancient civilization of the Mayas. This isolated land, difficult of access, remained relatively impervious to Spanish penetration. Even today, the Indians make up three-fifths of the population, a proportion which is about the same in all the countries of tropical America and has similar consequences in all of them. The Indian masses stagnate, steeped in mistrustful passivity by centuries of servitude, indifferent spectators of the struggle for power waged by more active minorities. In a country where there is no such thing as public opinion, where the struggle for power takes place without rules and without umpire, the decisive factor can only be force. And from the moment that force becomes the sole means of seizing and holding power, the normal mode of government is dictatorship tempered by the *coup d'état*.

In the first period following the establishment of Guatemalan independence in 1839,* power was held by the Conservative Party, political representative of the class of large landed proprietors. The *coup d'état* which brought Justo Rufino Barrios and the Liberal Party to power in 1871 marked the political debut of the mercantile bourgeoisie, a class of recent formation composed for the most part of persons of mixed Spanish and Indian ancestry. During the fifteen years of his dictatorship, Barrios confiscated and sold the estates of the Catholic Church, but he left the domains of the big landlords untouched. Reassured, the latter gradually drew closer to the regime and eventually came to exercise again a political influence corresponding to their economic preponderance.

United Fruit Arrives on the Scene

In the course of the nearly three-quarters of a century of Liberal Party rule (1871-1944), primitive and feudal Guatemala was penetrated by foreign capital—naturally enough, for the Liberal Party's dictatorship was exercised in the name of the trading class which was eager to increase its profits and extend its contacts abroad.

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* Like most of Central America, Guatemala won independence of Spain in 1821. After being annexed to Iturbide's Mexican empire (1822-1823), Guatemala joined with the other Central American countries to form the Republic of the United States of Central America which in turn disintegrated in the late 1830s.

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True, the process of foreign penetration had begun even earlier and had resulted in the seizure of part of Guatemala's territory by Britain. British pioneers had already established a foothold in the region at the end of the 18th century when they were granted a concession by the Spanish government to cut timber on an area of some 6,000 square kilometers. One of the clauses of the concession forbade the British foresters to establish armed forts. In 1859, however, the Guatemalan government, while still under the control of the Conservative Party, turned over to the British for exploitation 22,000 square kilometers without any restrictions whatever, and this economic concession was soon turned into full-fledged sovereignty. In return, the British agreed to build a road linking Belize, capital of the ceded territory, with the Guatemalan town of Izabal.* The disproportion between the territorial extent of the concession and the price demanded for it throws a revealing light on the primitiveness of an environment in which land has no market value while skilled labor, obtainable only from abroad, has an unlimited price. One can also suppose that the rulers of Guatemala would hardly have been so prodigal of the national territory unless, looking after their own interests better than those of their country, they had been particularly appreciative of the gifts emanating from Her Britannic Majesty's envoys.

The incapacity to provide certain needed public services plus the greed of its own leaders explain the attitude of the Conservative dictatorship in the face of British penetration. In due course the Liberal regime was to show the same complaisance toward United Fruit. The identification of the two phenomena is less superficial than one might be inclined to suppose. Juridically, the cession of territory is different from the granting of an economic concession to a private company. But it is from economic power that *de facto* sovereignty arises.

The first tentative probings of United Fruit in the Caribbean area occurred in 1871, the same year in which the liberal bourgeoisie rose to power in Guatemala City. The commander of an American corvette, Lorenzo Baker, transported from Jamaica to the United States the first cargo of bananas and with nine associates formed the Boston Fruit Company. At about the same time, two other American citizens, the Keith brothers, established the Tropical Trading Company on the basis of a concession granted by the government of Costa

* Izabal is a small place in the eastern part of the country situated on a lake of the same name, the waters of which flow into the Atlantic by way of the river Dulce. As a matter of fact, the road was never constructed, and the present Guatemalan government bases on this failure of the British to carry out their share of the agreement its claim for the return to Guatemala of the territory of Belize (British Honduras).

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Rica. The purpose of this company was the construction and operation of a railroad to be devoted principally to the transportation of bananas. In both these cases, transport preceded the acquisition of land. In 1898, Boston Fruit and Tropical Trading merged to form the United Fruit Company. Five years later, the company acquired from the Guatemalan government a monopoly of the export of bananas via the Atlantic. In exchange, it agreed to carry mail free of charge. Both functions required a port, and the government proceeded to turn over to the company not only all the installations of the port of Barrios (which had been constructed at government expense) but also the first section of a railroad designed to link Guatemala City with the Atlantic coast. Financial difficulties had interrupted the construction of the road, and the company agreed to complete the work at its own expense. In 1912, United Fruit purchased a majority of the shares of another American concern, the Guatemala Railway Company, and thereby acquired the lines on the Pacific side of the country. Master of the entire network, the company now set up an affiliate on which the government conferred a legal monopoly of railroad transport. Simultaneously, United Fruit bought up from a financially embarrassed concern the port installations of the two Pacific harbors of Champerico and San José.

Following the period of conquest of the means of transport came that of penetration in depth—the seizure of landed capital. In 1924 the company obtained a 99-year concession on the navigable river Motagua flowing toward the Atlantic. The company's rights extended to both banks from which its agents proceeded to expel the small Indian cultivators. In 1930, the government granted vast areas of Pacific lands to the company, one part of the contract being an engagement by the company to build a port in the ceded region. (But in 1936, the company was released from this obligation by Jorge Ubico, the last of the Guatemalan dictators, who came to power in 1931.) The company formed a new affiliate to exploit the enormous banana plantations of which it was now the proprietor. As an outgrowth of the contract to carry the mails which the company had assumed in exchange for its first concessions, it gradually built up a telephone and telegraph system and built radio stations; while another American company, Empresa Electrica (a subsidiary of Electric Bond and Share), obtained a monopoly over the generation and distribution of electric power.

Guatemala, geographically a relatively isolated country, was henceforth like a blind mute who can establish contact with the outside world only through the mediation of alien instruments and organs. The ships which entered and left its ports, the ports themselves, the railroads which crossed its territory, the telephone and telegraph lines, the radio waves—everything which connected the country with

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the rest of the world was in the hands of foreigners.

The Revolution of the Youth

To break out of this straitjacket was not the first aim of the revolutionary movement which in 1944 overthrew the dictatorship of Ubico and his ephemeral successor Ponce. The seeds of revolt were in all probability sown by United States propaganda against the dictators: Ubico appeared as another Hitler to young intellectuals who were much more interested in freedom of the press than in the fate of the peons or the privileges of United Fruit. The movement had its origin in the University and was supported by young officers who were friends of the students. Once more, in this country without public opinion, an active minority succeeded in imposing its will. But this time what bound the rebels together was a community not of interests but of age. A generation entered upon life by seizing power. Even now, one is surprised to find that in all the offices and consulates and legations of the Guatemalan government the key posts are held by young men. President Arbenz himself is only thirty-nine. The Guatemalan Revolution has all the characteristics of the student youth from which it originated: it is enthusiastic, generous, sure of itself, naive—even a little pedantic.

The privilege of naming the candidate for the presidency of the Republic belonged to the victors, that is to say, to the students. It was natural that their choice should fall upon a man who was looked up to as the most respected of their elders. Juan José Arévalo, philosopher and teacher, combined a high reputation with the prestige of distance. After studying and traveling abroad, he had for several years held a chair at the Argentine University of Tucuman. Unknown to the Guatemalan masses, he was himself unfamiliar with the realities of his own country. It was thus almost a foreigner who alighted from an Argentine plane one day during the winter of 1944 to take over power in his native land. Next morning the conservative papers of Guatemala City published skillfully retouched pictures showing the candidate with his arm upraised in a fascist-style salute. The founder of a regime which would later be accused of Communism started his political life under suspicion of conniving with the Hitler dictatorship—a suspicion which had no other foundation than the character of the regime established in Argentina a year and a half earlier as the result of the "colonels' *coup d'état.*"

Soon the conservatives changed their tactics and sought to win over Arévalo, judging that it would be easy to dupe and manipulate this man of peace, fallen from a cloudland of philosophic serenity into a spiderweb of unfamiliar petty intrigue. But in fact it was the conservatives who were duped by their own illusions and who thereby

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helped in the election of the candidate of the University. The future was to show that they had drawn the wrong conclusions from correct premises. It was correct to suppose that Arévalo, educational theorist that he was, would be interested above all in the organization of the educational system.* But this preoccupation, however far removed from the more "practical" concerns of the former rulers of Guatemala, proved to be no less realistic. In a country where lack of technical competence is an obstacle to any achievement, and where illiteracy vitiates political life by excluding the masses from the electoral process, the diffusion of education is the very first prerequisite of progress.

It was also true that Arévalo had been profoundly influenced by the Argentina in which he had lived and taught and where for the last year and a half Peron had been going from city to city demonstrating the danger of penetration by foreign capital and the necessity of economic liberation. These are ideas which we find repeatedly in the public statements of Arévalo: it was unquestionably a disciple of Peron who took power in Guatemala City. And the support which Argentina gave to Arévalo's heirs at the recent Caracas Conference shows that Peron is conscious of the relationship.

Faced with Guatemalan realities, Arévalo reacted like a half-stranger who had lived for a long time in a more developed country. On this point, too, the conservatives were right. In the presence of primitive conditions of life, more appropriate to animals than to human beings, the new President was as revolted as the reader of these lines would be if he were to visit the miserable Indian villages of Guatemala. But the conservative supporters of the candidate should have been warned of his true sentiments by a biting remark which he let drop in the course of his electoral campaign. "If I am elected president," he told the peons of a large rural estate, "I shall take steps to see that our workers are treated as well as though they were foreigners."

The Labor Code and the First Clash with United Fruit

The already precarious condition of the peons had further deterioriated during the fourteen years of Ubico's dictatorship. Under the pretext of fighting against inflation, the government had imposed wage cuts so that the rate fell from one quetzal a day on the average

* During the first four years of his presidency, Arévalo established 100 new schools, and this work has been carried on by his successor. From 1944 to 1953, the number of primary schools increased from 1,755 to 2,917, the number of pupils from 111,533 to 171,985, and the number of teachers from 4,265 to 7,517. Further, 98,000 persons learned to read and write through courses for adults.

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to .50 and in some regions even .25.*

Smallholders and farmers with less than a certain minimum of land, as well as landless agricultural workers with no regular jobs, had been compelled to furnish free a fixed number of days labor for highway construction and other public works. The system goes back to the old institution of the "corvée des routes," appropriate perhaps to the France of the sixteenth century but already judged inadequate and archaic by the Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century, those spiritual fathers of the French Revolution and of the American independence movement.

The peons were in no position to resist the impositions of the dictatorship since labor unions were forbidden. Attempts to organize the workers were legally punishable, and strikes were dealt with by courts martial. The press censorship even prohibited as subversive the use of the word "worker."

Guatemalan social legislation was more than a century behind that of the United States and Western Europe, and one would have to go back to the early centuries of the Middle Ages to find living conditions like those of the Indian proletariat of the Guatemalan countryside. To bring some relief to this profound distress, the Arévalo government first set out to provide the miserable Indian communities of the high plateau and of the tropical savannah with a link to the outside world. The road is the highway to liberation which brings drinkable water, electricty, medical care.** The sick peon is no longer left to die like a worked-out animal. The Institute of Social Insurance provides him with a sickness benefit. This same Institute builds hospitals, dispensaries, children's nurseries.***

Arévalo's efforts strived toward the far-off and unattainable model provided by the mode of life of the people of the United States. It is symptomatic that the President gave the name of Roosevelt to the great 1,000-bed hospital which he founded in Guatemala City. And there is no doubt that he felt he was following the American ideal in encouraging the organization of labor unions. From these early organizing efforts was to come later the General Confederation of Guatemalan Workers which now has 100,000 members. The Labor Code, promulgated in 1947, was simply a compilation of measures in force in most of the Western countries. It introduced to Guatemala

* Throughout the period under review the rate of exchange has been one quetzal equals one dollar. For easier understanding, we have therefore translated all further monetary figures into dollars.—ED.

** During the six years of Arévalo's presidency, eleven new roads were opened up. Drinkable water was brought to 30 villages, electricity to 36.

*** Seventeen hospitals were built by the Arévalo government. The nurseries set up under the direction of the President's wife, Elisa de Arévalo, were able to shelter and feed 15,000 needy children.

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the collective labor contract, the right to strike, tribunals for arbitrating labor disputes, and the minimum wage. Under the combined pressure of the unions and the state, wages quintupled in the years ahead.

The increase of wages, plus the payment of social benefits, imposed on United Fruit, the country's largest employer, additional costs of $200,000 a year. Accustomed to being above the law, the company at first simply refused to obey the new rules and yielded with a bad grace only after repeated delays. A phlegmatic witness of this curious contest, Mr. Kyle, the American Ambassador, apparently didn't think that it was his function to take up the cudgels for United Fruit stockholders to the extent of disputing the right of the miserable peons to a few more cents. But, to the great regret of President Arévalo, Mr. Kyle was suddenly recalled to Washington. His large black official-looking limousine was replaced by the jeep of Mr. Patterson, a singularly active little vehicle which ran up and down the country in all directions, stopping, in those days when plots succeeded each other in a steady stream, at the places where plotting against the government was under way. And Mr. Patterson showed how devoted he was to United Fruit's interests when in the guise of a diplomatic note he conveyed the company's terms to President Arévalo. The President remarked that a chief of state is obliged to receive the ultimatum of a foreign government but not of a business corporation. Whoever acted as the representative of private interests could not claim diplomatic privileges. Mr. Patterson was declared *persona non grata,* a decision which was justified by the tacit agreement implied in the State Department's naming of a new ambassador. Are we to believe that the United States government would have tolerated the expulsion of its ambassador by a little country like Guatemala if it had not been proven beyond question that Mr. Patterson had departed from the line of conduct proper to an ambassador and thus lost the right to the privileges attached to that office? Or are we to believe that the Guatemalan government would have dared take such action if it had not been in a position to provide proof positive to the State Department of Mr. Patterson's illegitimate actions?

The Agrarian Reform

Arévalo had put through in 1945 a constitution which established a representative system of government and universal suffrage and which guaranteed individual liberties to the citizen. The genuineness of this document and the faithfulness of its authors to its principles has been proven by the treatment accorded to the enemies of the regime. Despite the fact that they have hatched a series of plots against the government, several of which have ended in armed revolt, the courts have not pronounced a single death sentence for rebellion.

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But Arévalo was to provide the most convincing evidence that a real change had taken place in Guatemala on the day in 1950 when he was defeated in the presidential elections by Colonel Jacobo Arbenz, his young Minister of War. Never before had a president in control of the state apparatus been defeated for re-election: presidents retired when they got ready or else were overthrown by a *coup d'état*.

But from the moment the Indian masses, reassured and integrated into the body of society, began to take part in the electoral process, it was in the cards that Arévalo would be beaten by a rival championing land reform. This theme, which the outgoing president had never broached, was ideally suited to galvanize the masses in a country where 70 percent of the land was in the hands of a tiny group of no more than 2 percent of the landowners, where 112,000 families of farmers and tenants cultivated the property of others, and where hundreds of thousands of landless peons were waiting for an opportunity to work on the idle or badly cultivated *haciendas*.

Elected by a rural proletariat in search of land, Arbenz hastened to push through the agrarian reform law. The rate at which allotments were made has been very rapid. At the end of the first year, 510 estates had already been parceled out. Some 150,000 peasant-proprietors took possession of plots of land that had been assigned to them. The recently created Bank for Agricultural Credit loaned them $2.1 million for purchase of seeds, animals, fertilizer, and agricultural implements. The preamble of the agrarian law declares that by creating a mass of peasant consumers the law "prepares the way for the industrialization of the country." Accordingly, the establishment of the Bank for Industrial Credit followed immediately upon the passage of the agrarian reform law.

Allegations and Realities

The Guatemalan regime has been repeatedly charged with being Communist since the accession to power in 1950 of Colonel Arbenz and the promulgation of the agrarian reform law. To what extent is this law actually inspired by Communist theories? What is the role of the Communist Party in Guatemala today?

The Communist Party, banned by the Constitution of 1945, was subsequently reconstituted under the name of the Guatemalan Labor Party. Everyone knows the real orientation of this group. Enjoying the benevolent tolerance of the government, it in turn supports the policies of the government.

The Labor Party's representation in parliament—four out of a total of 54 seats—might lead one to suppose that its membership is some seven percent of the electorate. This, however, would be an overestimate. Actually, the party is primarily an intellectuals' movement

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and, thanks to the ability and vigor of its cadres, it has succeeded in winning the votes—both for parliament and in the unions—of many outside its own ranks, which hardly exceed a thousand members.

Does this little group which cannot even use its true name outweigh the power of the Party of Revolutionary Action, the government party which controls the presidency, the ministries, and nearly half the seats in parliament? True, the Communists have a certain influence in the General Confederation of Workers (the only trade union organization in the country), though the extent of this influence is not easy to measure. Does this mean that the unions are able to exert pressure on the executive and on parliament? The Bolivian government, under comparable circumstances, has complained of such pressure, and there is no reason the Arbenz government should be more compliant than that of Paz Estensoro. If Arbenz and his associates nevertheless remain silent, it is because they are free of Communist pressure—unless, indeed, they are acting in full agreement with the Communists or even are Communists themselves. This is, indeed, the insinuation of certain propagandists who have been much heard from recently. But if this is the case, why should the Communist Party be forbidden? And if it is answered that this was merely to pull the wool over the eyes of other American countries, then why haven't the leaders of the government joined the Labor Party if they really share its convictions?

The benevolent toleration which the Labor Party enjoys is clearly an important element of the problem. Consequently it is necessary to understand the relations which exist between this party and the government. In proscribing the Communist Party in the first place, Arévalo was doubtless moved both by his own convictions and by public opinion in other countries. But since he was basically a tolerant man, he did not object to the reconstitution in a new form of a small minority group that in no way interfered with his freedom of action. And today the government, attacked by the witch hunters abroad and by the conservative clan at home, seeks support from the Left. The appearance of trade unions opened up to the Communists a field of activity and influence. The Labor Party could bring support to the government; and it was no danger since the progress of the government on the political plane was much greater than that of the Labor Party in the trade unions. Moreover, the Labor Party is obliged to support any government which, by realizing social reforms, deprives it of its principal propaganda themes. First came simple toleration and then a limited form of cooperation.

If the Labor Party had been forbidden or subjected to serious restrictions, it would be easy to explain why Communists should operate in a disguised way. But since this group is openly Communist and enjoys a legal existence, since no stigma attaches to membership, and

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since its adherents can and do occupy public positions, why should Communists belong to other political organizations? A desire to hoodwink public opinion in other American countries would not be enough to explain such camouflage, for the Guatemalan government shows no fear of being suspected of conniving with Communists and in fact stands up to external pressure designed to force it to fire them from government jobs. In a country where Communists are almost completely free to avow their political beliefs without incurring any penalty, even of an intangible kind, why should we doubt the truthfulness of men who say they are not Communists, profess other ideas, and belong to other political organizations?

If they were lying, their actions should serve to reveal their true tendencies. Now, the most important of their actions, the agrarian reform, is precisely the one that has given rise to the Communist accusation. Is it, either by its nature or in the intentions which it reflects, a Communist measure? The intentions are stated in the preamble to the law. There its authors declare that the breaking up of the *haciendas* is aimed at "liquidating feudal property" and at "developing capitalist forms of cultivation and exploitation in agriculture." The facts confirm these objectives. The reform has created no *kolkhozes*, no communal enterprises. Quite the contrary, lands belonging to the state have themselves been parceled out. Large-scale landed property is being replaced by small holdings. Socially, this means the creation of a stratum of peasant-proprietors, the transformation of a mass eager for social change into a class of prosperous small farmers personally interested in the defense of private property. Conservatives are those who have something to conserve. Such a transformation of the economic structure can affect the Indians more profoundly than any other peoples. Age-long servitude has transformed their ancient communal spirit into a gregarious instinct. They huddle together like frightened beasts. Ownership of a small piece of land, in a relatively favorable social atmosphere, gives them something to defend, something to work for, and may easily lead to the appearance of a sense of individual initiative.

To be sure, this social evolution was not the motive of the reform. It was not out of devotion to some doctrine or social blueprint that the government acted when it put through the agrarian reform. The law was dictated by economic necessity. It would have imposed itself on any government which had not deliberately chosen, for reasons of personal aggrandizement, to ignore the necessities of an extraordinarily rapidly growing population. In 1938, there were just over two million inhabitants in Guatemala, today there are nearly three million. In other words, the population has grown by almost one-third in fifteen years. Nearly a million more mouths to feed, hundreds of thousands more jobs needed—here is the basic explana-

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tion of the agrarian reform. The big estate depends on an extensive method of cultivation: the large landowner does not try to extract the maximum return from each piece of land; he seeks to minimize the cost of equipment and of manual labor; he leaves vast stretches idle and plants others to forests or devotes them to pasture. The quantity of labor employed is small, the per acre yield low, the total product meager. With a very thinly spread-out population, this system has no fatal weaknesses. But with population growing fast, this system of agriculture fails to supply either the necessary amount of food or the required number of jobs. A hungry and unemployed peasant mass would either be material for a revolutionary movement or would engage in sporadic riots and uprisings. Parceling out the land, on the other hand, absorbs the surplus labor and, by supplying the spur of individual incentive, raises yields all around. In the final analysis, the reform was the sole method of avoiding a bloody and destructive revolution.

The great banana plantations of United Fruit are typical of the methods of cultivation condemned by population growth. The banana, an export commodity, occupies a place in the economy which ought to be devoted to the raising of the necessities of life. Moreover, the profits from the sale of bananas, flowing as they do to foreign stockholders, are not used to pay for the importation of foodstuffs from abroad. But in spite of all this, and in spite of the fact that Guatemalan landowners are not allowed to retain more than a maximum of 450 acres, the banana plantations of United Fruit were left intact by the agrarian reform: they could be of any size, with the single proviso that they must be actively cultivated. The only lands of the company that were divided up among the peasants were wastelands, forests, and prairies. The company has tried to explain the amount of land left idle by saying that it needs a period of recuperation. But even if this is true and if the company suffers some loss of profits through the taking of temporarily unproductive land, one can hardly balance this small reduction of monetary gain against the right of hundreds of thousands of human beings to a livelihood. Moreover, the stockholders are in no sense being deprived of their acquired rights: dividends distributed up to now have already returned to them many times their original investment, and the company is being reimbursed for lands taken from it at prices corresponding to the value declared for tax purposes. If this value is less than the market value of the land, one is entitled to assume that the declarations were falsified.

The Fear Complex

The untouchability of the company's banana plantations tacitly confirms United Fruit's ambiguous position as a private company

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escaping the provisions of the law and enjoying certain privileges which usually are associated with governmental institutions. This privileged position is indirectly reflected in another action of the government. Desirous of opening up free access to the outside world, the state nevertheless made no move to question the company's monopoly over railroads, ports, telephones, and telegraphs. Instead, the government undertook to construct a new port at Santo Tomas on the Atlantic and a road linking it with Guatemala City. The building of this highway has become an extremely important matter to this little country, its humble battle. The newspapers devote whole pages to the slow progress of the construction work on this "highway of national liberation." Each mile cut through the rock or the savannah is a victory. A walled-up people is digging painfully toward the open ocean.

This great effort at liberation spotlights the restrictions which hem the country in. Even if it were hostile or moved by evil intentions, what could it accomplish when all the necessary instruments are in the hands of foreigners? At the most, it could inject a few agitators into neighboring countries, although it is difficult to believe that their Guatemalan passports would be an airtight guarantee of safe passage to wherever they might want to go. If, under these circumstances, Guatemala can nevertheless be regarded as a menace by certain American journalists, what must be the fears which beset this little country in the face of the enormous industrial and military power of the United States? The object of its fear is not a few phantom conspirators; it is the undoubted and obvious presence, at all the levers of control throughout the country, of American businessmen, engineers, and technicians who, by a simple act of will, can stop the comings and goings of all trains and ships, halt the sending of messages, interrupt telephonic and radio communication, cut off electric power, paralyze the operation of factories, and plunge the streets into darkness. Why shouldn't the Guatemalans be afraid that these methods will be used against them when they read the Luce magazines or learn that the London *Evening Standard,* à propos of a declaration of the United States Ambassador to Guatemala, Mr. Peurifoy, writes that "the possibility of unilateral action by the United States cannot be excluded?"

Threatened by press campaigns abroad and by plots from within, Guatemala has been developing a siege complex. Less than a year after the suppression of the armed rising of Salama (in the north of the country) a new conspiracy was discovered last December. Newspapers in Guatemala City published photographic copies of correspondence between General Castillo Armas and the conservative leader Idigoras Fuentes—the two chiefs of the conspiracy exiled respectively in Honduras and El Salvador. In a letter written from

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Tegucigalpa (Honduras) on September 2, 1953, Castillo Armas informed President Somoza of Nicaragua that his plans for an insurrection had received "the approval of the government of the north." It is possible, of course, that the conspirators mistook their desires for reality. But if so, the campaigns led by certain United States papers and magazines were responsible for the error, which, in its turn, helped to build up the fears of the Guatemalan people.

If the Guatemalan peons and the small peasants who are benefiting from the agrarian reform come to believe that United States pressure on their country is endangering the modest gains which the present regime has brought them in recent years, if they reach the point of associating American power with a threat to their personal well-being, then their fear will develop into hostility against the United States and a desire to find friendship and aid outside the continent. We have seen how vain such hostile inclinations on the part of a country deprived of all means of action would be. But this is no reason for provoking them. On the contrary, should we not say that to the extent that hostility feeds on a complex of fear and impotence, it is both necessary and reasonable to bring back to life again the friendship of the peoples of the United States and Guatemala by simply removing the causes of the latter's fears? Freed from the dangerous illusions of fear and liberated from misery by stabilizing social reforms, Guatemala would offer no possible foothold to extra-continental influences and would naturally grow progressively closer to the United States.

Too many of those who prate about saving democracy are really only interested in saving things as they were. Democracy should concern itself also with things as they ought to be.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 5, 1938

It is thought that the peculiar merit of Democracy lies in this: that it gives to every man a chance to pursue his own ends. The reverse is true. The merit lies in the assumption imposed upon every man that he shall serve his fellow men. This is by the law of his being his only chance for happiness.

—John Jay Chapman, *Causes and Consequences*

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"FREE WORLD" DEPARTMENT

Under this heading we present from time to time illuminating pieces of source material (all headlines are in the originals) about the nature and workings of the "Free World" in defense of which the American ruling class is leading a holy crusade.—THE EDITORS

AFRICAN RED DENIED SEAT

Parliament Refuses to Accept Member Elected by Negroes

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, April 28—For the third time in two years Negroes of Western Cape Province have returned a white Communist to Parliament only for the victor to be unseated immediately.

Miss Ray Alexander won a by-election caused by the unseating of her two Communist predecessors. The police prevented her entering the Parliament building after she was declared elected last night.

Miss Alexander beat the candidate of the Liberal party by 3,525 votes to 998. A new election will be held.

—*New York Times, April* 29, 1954

BROWNELL JUSTICE:

Six Strawberry Farmers Convicted on Antitrust Act

Six small strawberry farmers in Louisiana and a union organizer were convicted in U.S. District Court in New Orleans under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. The conviction of the leaders of a 3,000-member AFL union, known as the Louisiana Fruit and Vegetable Producers Cooperative Marketing Union, Local 312, came as a victory for U.S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell, coincident with Brownell's amicable settlement of a number of antitrust actions against some of the nation's largest corporations.

The strawberry farmers who cultivated less than three acres each in strawberries and earned less than $400 annually in 1951, united against chain store and commission agent buyers in an effort to secure the market price for the products of the labor of their families.

Prison sentences of six to nine months, plus fines of $500 to $1,000 each were assessed against the small farmers, while the union cooperative was fined $4,000. Henry E. "Hank" Hasiwar, vice president of the National Agricultural Workers Union, and one of the major organizers, was among those fined and given a prison sentence. Each man was placed on probation for one year upon payment of the fines.

"It appears," H. L. Mitchell, NAWU president, said, "that the

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U.S. Department of Justice enforces the antitrust law one way against the rich and another way against the poor. Antitrust actions against the major oil and aluminum corporations are settled amicably by Brownell, who turns right around and persecutes the poor and needy who try to get a better deal for their families."

—*AFL News Reporter, May* 7, 1954

Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., Ltd., recommended a final common dividend of 25% plus a bonus of 12½% for 1953. An interim dividend of 5% was paid December 7, making a total for the year of 42½%, compared with 35% paid in fiscal 1952.

—*Wall Street Journal, May* 7, 1954

DU PONT PROFITS SOAR IN QUARTER

Sales Fall, but Earnings Rise to $73,793,248, Against $56,721,002 Year Ago

TAX CUT IS RESPONSIBLE

Sharply reduced taxes enabled E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. to increase net income to $73,793,248, or $1.56 a common share, in the first quarter. Last year, the company earned $56,721,002, or $1.19 a share, in the initial three months on lower sales.

The quarterly statement issued for publication today lists Federal taxes on operating income and renegotiation at $64,150,000, in contrast to $112,170,000 provided in the 1953 first quarter, which included excess profits taxes. Net sales declined to $402,641,229 from $440,072,496 in the first three months last year. . . .

—*New York Times, May* 1, 1954

Our nation harbors three times as many criminals as college students.

Three major crimes are committed every minute.

A murder is committed every 40 minutes.

There are 60 suicides in our nation daily.

There are more barmaids in America than college girls.

—*J. Edgar Hoover, quoted in ad in Los Angeles Times, April* 13, 1954

CLARK ARRIVES: NOT OPTIMISTIC

General Says Russ Don't Want Shooting War

—*New Orleans Times-Picayune, April* 27, 1954

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PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN SOCIALISM

A FINAL WORD

BY THE EDITORS

In concluding the discussion which has been running under the heading "Problems of American Socialism" in recent issues, we shall confine attention to a few questions which seem to us to require either clarification or a statement of editorial policy.

A number of people have been critical of us, some sharply so, for ever having published "Politics and the Proletariat," around which most of the discussion has centered. The reasons given can be grouped together into three categories: (1) The description of workers' opinions and attitudes is wrong. (2) The conclusions are wrong. (3) There is something the matter with the author or his methods (or both). Most of what we want to say can conveniently take the form of comment on these three charges.

(1) *Workers' Opinions and Attitudes.* In our considered judgment, Special Correspondent (the author of "Politics and the Proletariat") presented an accurate report on the group of workers he had an opportunity to observe at close range. More important, we believe that his findings apply, with appropriate minor modifications, to a large part (though of course not all) of the American working class. We base these views on well-known facts, personal observation, and discussion with informed people in widely separated parts of the country.

Among the most reactionary newspapers in the United States are Patterson's New York *Daily News,* Hearst's New York *Daily Mirror,* and McCormick's *Chicago Tribune.* These three papers have the biggest circulation, daily and Sunday, in the country. In almost every big city—North, South, East, or West—the paper with the highest circulation is reactionary, frequently as virulently so as the top three.

Reader's Digest, with a circulation of over 11 million in the United States and Canada, is easily tops in the magazine field. Second on the list, with less than half the circulation of *Reader's Digest,* comes *Life.*

The situation is much the same in the fields of radio and TV.

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The pundits and commentators who peddle the most reactionary line have the biggest audiences.

Keep these facts in mind and now read again what the author of "Politics and the Proletariat" tells us about the way the group he studied got its information:

> Almost all the workers read either the *Daily News* or the *Mirror* or both, and the line taken by these newspapers was followed with considerable fidelity. . . . In general there was a close correspondence between attitudes toward the UN, foreign aid, and Communism, and the editorial position of the *News* and *Mirror*. Aside from these newspapers, the *Journal-American* on the way home, and a few of the more popular magazines and pocket books, the men apparently read nothing at all. Their evenings, so far as could be determined, are spent watching TV, attending sports events or movies, or on social visits.

In the light of newspaper circulation figures in other cities, it seems reasonable to suppose that with the substitution of the name of the local rag, this paragraph would adequately describe the information-getting habits of workers outside New York. If this is the case, why should anyone expect their viewpoint to be other than reactionary?

Perhaps the answer is that we should expect a more enlightened stand at least from members of unions? If so, then it becomes relevant to ask: (a) to what extent do their unions teach a different point of view, and (b) how effective is that teaching?

The CIO has, from its inception, done a good job on the problem of discrimination. But on most issues, neither the CIO nor the AFL have, in recent years, fought militantly for a program much different from that of the reactionary press and radio, and this is especially true in the now all-important field of foreign policy. Certainly no one would argue that either AFL or CIO unions have tried to make their members *class conscious*. Nor, as George Woodard correctly pointed out in his "What Ails American Socialism?", has there been on the scene an effective left political party which has taught class struggle and the need for socialism.

Where this does happen, where a union does effectively plug for a different line, as has been the case with some left-wing unions (notably Bridges' ILWU) or where the socialist message, from whatever source, does get through to the workers, the influence of the reactionary press and radio can be and has been lessened. But without such education and leadership, in a period of relatively high wages and steady work, why should it be assumed that workers' ideas will be opposed to those of the newspapers they read, the radio they listen to, and the TV they watch?

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In a period of economic distress and/or social ferment, of course, the situation is entirely different. Thus, in the 1930s, the workers' best teacher was their own economic plight: the lessons they learned from life were all that was needed to expose the lies of the reactionary press and radio. And there is some evidence that in areas of heavy unemployment the same lessons are beginning to be re-learned today. But under conditions such as have prevailed in this country in recent years—conditions which have been both objectively and subjectively extremely favorable for the reactionaries—we submit that to expect workers to have other than reactionary views is naive or irrational or both.

(2) *The Conclusions To Be Drawn.* This does *not* mean that we agree with the conclusions drawn by Special Correspondent. He finds that the workers are reactionary and bigoted and therefore concludes that "socialists should cease to think in terms of broad political movements or of broad appeals to a hostile or indifferent mass of citizens."

This seems to us to be a counsel of despair, and we reject it without the slightest hesitation. It is based on the implicit assumption that the present situation is, at least in its broad outlines, both stable and durable. If this is not so, then surely the history of the last twenty years should alert us to the dangers of generalizing about social attitudes over any extended period of time.

We believe that the assumption is wrong in both aspects. The current economic recession and the Indo-China crisis are sufficient evidence of the economic and political instability of the present situation; and the historical trends which in the space of less than half a century have produced two world wars and swept a third of the world's population into the orbit of a new socialist system suggest that on any historically relevant time scale the present situation in this country, as well as elsewhere in the world, is the very reverse of durable.

What American socialists need, we believe, is not a reappraisal of the role which socialist theory has always assigned to the working class. It is as true today as it ever has been—and the experience of the last few years proves it to the hilt—that there can be no left-wing politics worthy of the name that is not grounded in the working class. What American socialists need—and what MR tries to give them—is a sense of history, an understanding of what is going on in the world at large, and a faith both that these things can be taught to workers and that workers, once they see the issues clearly, will act to save themselves and the rest of us from the disasters which are the inevitable products of a dying capitalist world order.

(3) *The Author and His Methods.* Several of the contributors to

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the current discussion were scornful, even venemous, toward the author of "Politics and the Proletariat," not only because his description of working-class attitudes was not to their liking, but particularly because he is a teacher at a university. That, to them, spelled "intellectual"—and an intellectual who dares to criticize the working class has, in the eyes of some left-wingers, committed an unpardonable sin. We are used to the current criticism of "eggheads" by bigots and reactionaries; is the left-wingers' sneering attitude toward intellectuals in the movement any less bigoted and reactionary? We don't think so.

Other criticisms concerned Special Correspondent's methods—his observation of a small group of workers in one city and the framing of broad generalizations on the basis of this observation. Some critics appear to believe that this whole procedure is in some way unscientific and objectionable. In our view this criticism is entirely unfounded. Careful personal observation is an indispensable method in all the social sciences. We know Special Correspondent as a capable observer and an honest reporter, and we have every reason to believe what he says. As for the broad generalizations, it is quite true that they may be wrong. Special Correspondent is as aware of that as anyone, and he explicitly stated that he was not claiming general validity for his factual statements. His generalizations, in other words, were in the nature of hypotheses which can and should be put to the test of additional observation and should be amended in any respects in which they could be proved to be deficient.

It was, indeed, precisely for the purpose of putting them to such a test that we published "Politics and the Proletariat" and invited discussion from readers. We hoped and expected that those who disagree with Special Correspondent would furnish contrasting or conflicting evidence on working-class attitudes in other localities and lines of work. That would certainly be the most effective way of disputing Special Correspondent's generalizations. But the evidence actually submitted by readers is almost wholly in support of Special Correspondent's statement of facts, and the most vehement critics, without exception, failed to supply any evidence at all. An unbiased observer, we submit, would have to conclude from all the contributions to the discussion that the attitude of a selected group of New York building trades workers are a good deal more representative of working-class attitudes in general than he would have been inclined to assume at the outset. But if any readers have concrete evidence that this is not so—evidence of the kind provided by Special Correspondent—let him or her send it in. We will be delighted to publish it.

Finally, there are one or two matters of MR editorial policy which seem to come up every time we invite discussion and on which we should like to take this opportunity to state our position.

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First, we are often chided for publishing something which, in the critic's opinion, is wrong or misleading (as already indicated, "Politics and the Proletariat" is a case in point). We simply do not agree with this reasoning. What we write ourselves, we stand behind 100 percent. Articles writen by others seem to us to have merit or we would not print them. But in a discussion, the merit may be precisely in presenting a point of view with which many readers, perhaps including ourselves, do not agree. In such cases, it is the responsibility of those who disagree to give a reasoned, factual answer—or to stop grumbling.

Second, it is sometimes contended that an article, even if true, should not be published (again, this refers particularly to "Politics and the Proletariat"). This comes especially from people who feel that telling the truth may make people pessimistic and discourage them from further activity. This kind of thinking seems to us not only wrong-headed but actually dangerous. It is responsible, more than anything else, for a characteristic fault of the American Left—that it frequently bases its analyses and programs, not on facts but on hopes. To argue that "you should not print that even if it is true" is an argument for deception of one's own friends and followers. It stems from a lack of faith in their ability to take the bad with the good, and it results, when the truth can no longer be concealed, in disillusionment and disaffection.

And third, we are sometimes criticized for publishing an author whom the critic finds objectionable regardless of what he writes. There were hints of this in some of the belittling references to the author of "Politics and the Proletariat," but it came out much more strongly in earlier discussions. For example, a number of readers took violent exception to our publishing a piece by George Clarke in the "How Shall We Vote" discussion (November, 1952). Clarke, then a member of the Socialist Workers Party, is today one of the editors of *The American Socialist,* the organ of a group that split off from the Trotskyites last year. Our answer is that we do not intend to apply political tests to MR readers who respond to our invitation to participate in discussion. There are already too many political tests in this country and we will not add to them. We have judged, and will continue to judge, contributions by content and style—and that goes for Trotskyites or anyone else who is interested enough to submit material to us for our consideration.

Of all the tyrannies on human kind
The worst is that which persecutes the mind.
Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*

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WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

The Bluff and Bluster Line

Three maps were printed in the *New York Times,* Sunday, May 9, 1954. The heading: "Our Expanding Defense Commitments on the Pacific—The Situation at Three Stages. The black and white striped areas on the three maps represent the United States, its dependencies, and other regions within its defense perimeter."

Map I, "Before World War II," included United States, Alaska, the Aleutians, Hawaii, Canton Island, Wake, Guam, and the Philippines. The dotted "defense line" ran at some distance west of the mid-Pacific.

Map II, "Before Korea," added the Japanese Archipelago, the Pacific islands mandated to Japan by the League of Nations and occupied by the United States during and after the 1941-1945 war, Canada, and Mexico. The dotted defense line ran west of the Aleutians, skirted the coast of Asia, Borneo, and Celebes and thence southeast across the Pacific.

Map III, "Under Dulles Plan," added to the territories shown in Maps I and II, South Korea, Formosa, Thailand, Indo-China, skirted around Malaya, included the eastern half of New Guinea, Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand.

Thus step by step, in less than twenty years, Washington's "defense perimeter" has been enlarged to take in, not only the entire Pacific, with all of its land masses, but three territories on the Asian mainland—South Korea, Thailand, and Indo-China.

Fifty years ago an area claimed by a great power was a "colony," a "dependency," or a "sphere of influence." Today it is a "defense perimeter." Names have changed with the changing times. The color and the smell are the same.

If to the west of this "Dulles Plan" map of the "Pacific Defense Perimeter" is placed a map of the "Atlantic Defense Perimeter" (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the proposed Balkan Defense Pact, including Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey, and the Near East Defense Pact, covering Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan, all negotiated or projected during the same twenty years, the two maps fit together like a jig-saw puzzle. Washington's defense commitments cover the entire Northern Hemisphere and, under the Inter-American Pact

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and the understanding with Canada, likewise include the Western Hemisphere. Outside of Africa (in which United States interests are being rapidly extended) and the Iron Curtain countries, Washington is committed to defend the entire planet.

One reservation must be made. With the exception of Pakistan, the generalization in the previous paragraph does not include the five Asian powers (Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon, and India) which held a meeting in Colombo during the early stages of the Geneva Conference. There were differences between the Asian Prime Ministers concerning the dangers of Communist expansion, but they were unanimous in rejecting military intervention in Indo-China, in favoring an immediate Indo-China cease-fire, and in demanding the admission of China to the United Nations. On all of the major issues, the Asian leaders meeting in Colombo, speaking for some 600 million Asians, were opposed to the Dulles Plan for Asia. Therefore they also may lie outside the Washington Defense Perimeter.

Secretary Dulles may believe that "the interests of the United States and other free nations are vitally involved with the interests of France and the Associated States in resisting Communist domination of Indo-China." (State Department statement of April 17, 1954.) Admiral Radford, Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, may be convinced that "the free nations cannot afford to permit a further extension of the power of militant Communism in Asia." (Speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 15, 1954.) The Eisenhower administration may be fighting Communism tooth and nail, but historians will note that during the anti-Communist struggle United States air, naval, and ground forces, and United States business interests were securing a stranglehold on strategic areas all around the planet.

Since Secretary Dulles' plan for Asia had the support of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Bao Dai's Vietnam, with a maximum of 45 million inhabitants, and the questionable adherence of the Philippines, Formosa, and South Korea, with a total of 48 million inhabitants (or 93 million Asians all told), and since the present Asian population is somewhere about 1,260 million, it seems evident that United States-dominated Asians will not be numerous enough to save Asia from the Asians at Washington's behest.

Then what must be done? Obviously, the United States must be prepared either to lead and dominate a military force, such as that in Korea between 1950 and 1953, committed to saving Southeast Asia, or else United States allies, chiefly Europeans, must assume and carry the burden. On April 24, 1954, at a Big Three meeting in Paris, Bidault asked Dulles for United States planes and pilots, to save Dienbienphu. Dulles replied that such a decision must be made

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by Congress, but that chances of approval would be greater if Britain would agree to "united action." The Secretary of State, with White House approval, said, in a word, that Washington was prepared to defend its defense perimeter with air and naval units only to the extent that certain Western allies, notably Britain, would participate in the operation. A few days later, at a press conference, President Eisenhower suggested that, if necessary, the United States might be prepared, reluctantly, to go it alone without Great Britain.

Calling the Bluff

London cast the decisive vote which prevented British-American military intervention in the Indo-China war during the Dienbienphu crisis. On Sunday, April 25, a special cabinet meeting, called by the Prime Minister and attended by the heads of civilian and military ministries, decided that it would not be possible for Britain to intervene militarily in Indo-China without running the risk of a major war with the Chinese Peoples Republic. Such a war the British were not prepared to undertake.

Britain still has important interests in Asia, which its government is bound to protect. The British Cabinet considered these special interests in another meeting on May 24. It also took up the grave situation created by talks initiated between Washington and Paris leaders, which had been undertaken without the consent and even without the knowledge of London, and the possibility of British isolation in case the United States and France agreed on a policy of military action in Indo-China, independent of Great Britain. Added urgency was injected into the situation by increased Vietminh activity in the Red River Delta. Despite the difficulties, the British held to their declared policy of doing everything in their power to make the Geneva Conference a success.

The State Department, from the inception of the Berlin Conference, had done its utmost (1) to prevent the holding of the Geneva Conference; (2) if it was held, to make it fail or to minimize its importance. This put Dulles and Eden in opposite camps, both at Berlin and at Geneva, and opened the way for the Washington-London-Paris split that played so important a part in the Dienbienphu debacle.

Eden wanted to agree with the Communists on a program for peace in Southeast Asia.

Dulles wanted a Southeast Asia conference from which Communists were excluded, and an anti-Communist Asian alliance which could wage war against Communism. This position had the active support of Knowland, Nixon, and the pro-war China Lobby faction in Washington.

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British leaders have been convinced, ever since 1946, that the best way to protect their interests in Asia is (1) to allow the Asians to govern themselves by agreeing to independence for India and Burma, (2) to recognize existing, stable Asian governments, such as that of the Chinese Peoples Republic, (3) to admit them into the United Nations and to negotiate with them at Geneva and other international conferences.

France could not save the situation in Indo-China. The United States would not, unless Britain cooperated. Britain's conception of the Asian situation differed fundamentally from the Washington outlook. In effect, therefore, London decided that Paris should follow her example and negotiate on equal terms with independent Asian governments, whether or not they are Communist.

Thus the Bluff and Bluster Line, laid down by the Secretary of State, backed by the President, and enthusiastically supported by Vice-President Nixon, Senator Knowland, and other backers of the "let-'em-have-it" school was breached, not by Asians, but by Washington's chief ally—the Conservative-directed government in London.

Ideological Overcommitment

The real issue in Asia is self-determination—the right of Asians to set up governments and economies of their own choosing. I. F. Stone made this point in an exchange of questions and answers with Secretary Dulles during a Washington press conference. In the course of the dialogue, Dulles admitted or implied: (1) that he is not for Indo-Chinese independence now, (2) that he does not favor an Indo-China plebiscite now, and (3) that if such a plebiscite resulted in the victory of Ho Chi Minh, the State Department would not recognize his government. In a word, Washington stands for trusteeship and not independence in Asia.

The keynote of this trusteeship is to be no extension of Communism, by conquest, by election, by coalition, or by any other means. President Truman asserted this principle on March 12, 1947. The Republicans have made the Truman Doctrine their own.

The Eisenhower administration is out to contain, constrict, and finally to destroy Communism. Meanwhile, Asians may not go Communist on pain of napalming and hydrogen-bombing.

Behind this policy is the assumption that the United States social system is the best one—for everybody, everywhere. Americans who question the assumption will be fired, smeared, and jailed. Asians will be cinderized and vaporized.

Spanish imperialists, proceeding on an assumption of ideological rectitude, lost their grip on one of the vastest empires organized in

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modern times. The British were wiser, insisting not on ideological conformity but on cash payment, in full, and with interest.

United States policy makers are following the Spanish line—ideological correctness as a preliminary to credit and trade. Historically, such ideologically-founded power structures, even in the palmy days of imperialism, collapsed under pressure of the contradictions they engendered and nurtured.

Historical Perspective

The United States Defense Perimeter as outlined in the *New York Times* Map III, is a Bluff and Bluster line because it cannot be held under present conditions by United States armed forces, with the available allied and satellite backing. There is an even more important reason for calling it a Bluff and Bluster Line: it is drawn across the clearly marked path of present-day historical forces.

Since 1895, revolution and counter-revolution have swept back and forth across Asia, Latin America, Europe, and Africa. The movement began in the Spanish West Indies and the Philippines, extended to China, South Africa, Mexico, India, and spread through North Africa, Turkey, and the Near East. These struggles were directed by colonials or semi-colonials against imperial overlords, located chiefly in Europe.

Russia came into the picture with the revolutions of 1905 and 1917. From 1918 to 1922, the ferment spread through Middle and West Europe. In March, 1919, great power delegates meeting in Versailles, turned their attention from treaty-making to the task of counter-revolution. Great Britain's Lloyd George led the drive. It was backed by all of the Western powers. The Bavarian, Hungarian, and Finnish Soviets were destroyed. The Soviet Union was invaded by imperialist armies from West and East. Mussolini seized power in Italy. Counter-revolutionary regimes were established in the Baltic States, Poland, and the Balkan countries. Chiang Kai-shek began his drive against the Left in 1926. The Spanish Republic, founded in 1932, was destroyed in 1936-1939 by Italy, Germany, Britain, and the United States. Hitler began his crusade against Communism in 1927, became the Chief of State six years later, initiated the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936, and invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. Revolutionary upsurge from 1895 to the mid-1920s had yielded to a counter-revolutionary down-drag that lasted from the early 1920s to the mid-1940s.

War in 1936-1945 engendered and released revolutionary forces that swept across East Europe, North Africa, and Asia. Even before the war ended in 1945, the United Nations Conference in San Francisco ran head on into the group of nations led by the United States, which insisted on trusteeship over the colonial areas, and the

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group led by the Soviet Union, demanding independence. In China, Korea, Indonesia, India, Burma, Indochina, Malaya, the Middle and Near East, and across Africa the struggle raged. Shooting stopped in Europe in 1945. It has continued in Asia and Africa to the present moment.

It was in Asia that the forces of revolution and counter-revolution clashed most sharply from 1945 to 1954. After the Chinese Peoples Republic was set up in 1949, the chief antagonists in the struggle for Asia were Peking and Washington. The Korean War which the United States appropriated in 1950, and the Indo-China War, taken over by Washington in 1954, were hot spots in the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution.

Bolshevism burst, unexpected, on the warring West in 1917. Its spread was restricted to Russia and minor parts of China until the wars of 1936-1945. In 1939, the Communist world had some 200 million inhabitants. By 1949, its population exceeded 800 millions. The decision of China to cast in its lot with the Soviet areas, the pointed refusal of India to support the demands of the West for trusteeship, continued Western military occupation of Asia, and the militant insistence of various Asian and African peoples upon independence, led to the ill-advised, Quixotic Truman-Dulles anti-Communist crusade. Policy makers may utilize and direct the flow of historical forces. They cannot check or contain them any more than engineers can check or contain the waters of the Missouri-Mississippi.

The wars in Korea, Malaya, and Indo-China resulted from the determined efforts of colonial peoples to set up governments and social systems of their own choosing. Against this independence trend, Washington frantically mobilized its "free world" to Koreanize entire countrysides and cremate the inhabitants with jellied gasoline. Even if the American Oligarchy is prepared to vaporize human culture, to exterminate life and to shatter the planet, its drive to reverse the course of history is self-defeating and in the long run is bound to be self-destructive.

The Soviet Union has become a moral yardstick by which we evaluate our national deeds and virtues. We must commit no deed, large or small or good or bad, without first measuring it to the Soviet pattern. And if, in making our daily genuflections toward the Kremlin, its towers are obscured by fog, we are paralyzed. We cannot move at all until the weather clears.

—Dalton Trumbo

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(*continued from inside front cover*)

remains acutely dangerous and that the need for wider understanding of the issues is as urgent as ever. Please send in your orders for copies of the pamphlet and your contributions to assist its distribution right away. Prices are: single copy—25c; six copies—$1; forty copies—$5.

The New Hampshire witch hunt, which we have been briefly reporting on in this space in recent months, has taken a new turn. In March, Paul Sweezy gave a lecture (for the third year in a row) on socialism to a large survey course (called the "Humanities" course) at the University of New Hampshire. This seems to have alarmed and/or infuriated the state Attorney General who is in charge of the witch hunt. He proceeded to question a considerable number of the students who attended the lecture, and then put Professor G. H. Daggett, who had served as intermediary in extending the invitation to Sweezy, on the grill. (Daggett, incidentally, is deservedly one of the most popular teachers at UNH and has received magnificent support from the student body throughout the affair to date.) Daggett refused to discuss the lecture and also refused to answer questions about the Progressive Party in New Hampshire, both refusals being based primarily on the contention that these are matters that have nothing to do with the subject the Attorney General is supposed to be concerning himself with, that is, alleged activities aimed at overthrowing constitutional government by force and violence. The Attorney General then petitioned the Superior Court to order Daggett to answer all questions or be found in contempt. On June 3rd, Sweezy was questioned for a second time (for three and a half hours). He continued his refusal to discuss the Progressive Party and, like Daggett, declined questions relating to the UNH lecture, whereupon the Attorney General took this case to court too. At the moment of writing, argument in the Daggett case has been set for June 28th, while no date has yet been set in the Sweezy case. The legal problems involved (which may be somewhat wider in the Sweezy case since various questions relating to published writings were also brought up by the Attorney General) are complicated, and it is quite impossible at this time to predict what will happen. Nevertheless it is clear enough that this may become an important case involving both political freedom and academic freedom. We plan to give MR readers a fuller report as soon as the situation becomes clarified.

A number of readers have written us asking where they can obtain the book *Eyewitness in Indo-China* by Joseph Starobin to which we referred in last month's Review of the Month. The answer is: from Cameron & Kahn, 109 Greenwich Ave., New York 14, N. Y. (cloth-bound, $2.50; paper-bound, $1). We take this opportunity to recommend the book strongly: it gives both facts and a point of view which, so far as we know, are available nowhere else in this country.

A meeting to celebrate MR's fifth birthday was held under the auspices of MR Associates at the Hotel Capitol in New York on May 20th. Despite very bad weather, the attendance was excellent, a larger room than usual for Associates meetings having been filled to overflowing. Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild, Chairman of the Associates, was in charge of ceremonies and most graciously presented the editors with tie-pins which will serve as permanent reminders of an eminently enjoyable occasion. Leo Huberman spoke on "The Repression," Paul Sweezy on "The Recession," and Scott Nearing on "The Resistance." At 11 o'clock, Chairman Fairchild was finally obliged to cut off the lively discussion that followed. Our thanks to everyone who helped to make the meeting such an outstanding success.

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